

HANSARD

5 APRIL 2011

QUESTION TIME

Dr M.D. NAHAN to the Minister for Health:

I am aware that a new children's hospital is to be built at the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre that will cater for children from all over the state, including my electorate of Riverton. Everyone is looking forward to this—not least because there is currently a mini-baby boom on in Riverton! Recently the opposition was giving out cards in my electorate claiming that the new children's hospital would be privatised. This is news to me and to the people of Riverton, and I therefore ask: has the Minister for Health changed his mind about how the services in the new children's hospital will be delivered?

Dr K.D. HAMES replied:

Before I answer—this is a hard for me to do, being an ex-Guildfordian—I want to welcome to the gallery students from year 11 at Wesley College, on behalf of the member for South Perth.

I thank the member for Riverton for the question, because, obviously, the construction of the new children's hospital is critical not only for him, but for all members in this state. We have reached a very significant milestone in the process of constructing this hospital; that is, we have short-listed three consortia as successful applicants to go on and develop a request for proposal.

Those three successful applicants are Leighton Contractors Pty Ltd and Broad Construction Services Pty Ltd joint venture; Brookfield Multiplex Constructions Pty Ltd; and John Holland Pty Ltd. They will proceed with that work. As members will be aware, this is a 274-bed new children's hospital. This process will allow the final contractor to be determined and the contract awarded by the middle of this year. Construction will start in early 2012 and be completed in 2015.

However, the member also referred to a pamphlet that was being handed out. I have a copy of it with me. It is headed "Stop the Liberal Government Privatising our Hospitals", and it shows the email address of Sue Ellery. I gather the Leader of the Opposition was seen handing out this card also.

Last week I used a turn of phrase that the Leader of the Opposition wished me to withdraw. It related to extremely distorting the truth. I forget which words I used; and, if I knew, I would use them again, because once again the opposition is trying to distort the facts by saying things to the public that are totally untrue.

I have said in this house and outside this house that the new children's hospital will not have us proceeding down the route of contracting out services beyond what is already being done at the existing children's hospital. We will not do that. I have said that in this house, and it will not happen at the new children's hospital.

So what do we see in the pamphlet? It says, "The new Children's Hospital will be next." That is a blatant distortion of the truth. One might indeed use the three-letter word in this house and be able to defend the use of that three-letter word, but to avoid my having to withdraw that three-letter word, I will just say that the opposition is once again totally destroying any resemblance to the truth.